

# SAMANTHA LEON

Honolulu, Hawai'i

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

*Public relations, invisible disabilities in the workplace, organizational listening, organizational communication, employee relations*

## EDUCATION

### Doctor of Philosophy in Communication and Information Sciences

2029

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa | Honolulu, Hawai'i

- GPA: 4.0/4.0
- Relevant coursework: Communication & Information Theories of Society, Communication & Information Research Methods, Quantitative Research Methods, Disability & Diversity Studies: Health Equity & Disability, Communication & Information Technologies, Social Media, Qualitative Research Methods\*
- Focus area exams: Social Informatics (Secondary; passed Spring 2025), Communication & Information Theories (Secondary; passed Fall 2025)

*\*Denotes courses in progress*

### Master of Arts in Mass Communication

2022

*Specialization: Public Relations*

University of Florida | Gainesville, Florida

- GPA: 4.0/4.0, *summa cum laude*
- Relevant coursework: Public Relations Theory, Art & Science of Storytelling, Seminar in Mass Communication Teaching, Measurement and Evaluation, Digital Political Campaigning, Public Relations Strategy and Messaging, Strategic Writing for Public Relations, Social Media Community Management

### Bachelor of Science in Public Relations

2019

*Outside concentration: Psychology*

University of Florida | Gainesville, Florida

- GPA: 4.0/4.0, *summa cum laude*
- Relevant coursework: Principles of Behavior Analysis, Social Psychology, Ethics & Professional Responsibility in Public Relations, Public Relations Research, Law of Mass Communications, International Public Relations, International Advertising, Public Relations Campaigns, Consumer & Audience Analytics

### Associate of Arts in Journalism

2017

Santa Fe College | Gainesville, Florida

- GPA: 3.9/4.0, *graduation with highest honors*

## CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

Leon, S. C. (2026). *Invisible Disabilities in the Workplace: A Leader-Member Exchange Lens*. Accepted abstract, International Public Relations Research Conference (IPRRC), Orlando, FL March 2026

## HONORS AND AWARDS

Outstanding Public Relations Scholar Award   University of Florida	2020
Dean's Cup for Scholarship Award   University of Florida	2020
President's Honor Roll   University of Florida	2019

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Graduate Assistant** Aug. 2024 – Present

Communication and Information Sciences Ph.D. Program

- Collaborate with the Communication and Information Sciences (CIS) program chair to design and execute weekly seminars through both online and hybrid formats
- Update and maintain the CIS program website
- Assist with outreach initiatives to connect with prospective, current and former students
- Develop and implement visibility strategies to enhance the program's presence and impact across academic and professional landscapes, contributing to an increase in Ph.D. applications from 6 to 23 in one admissions cycle
- Created and currently manage the program's LinkedIn account, leveraging the platform to showcase program news, share content and connect with a broader audience

**Public Relations & Marketing Researcher** May 2023 – Sept. 2023

Christie Bilbrey Digital Marketing Agency

- Devised competitive strategies for the agency's rebrand, including social media content and the introduction of AI tools
- Monitored the media landscape for relevant trends and prepared clients for media interviews
- Researched podcast guesting opportunities in light of clients' thought leadership goals and audience impact objectives
- Proposed and developed new growth strategies for the agency's podcast, researched guest speakers and topics, and co-hosted an episode of the agency's podcast

**Public Relations Assistant** Aug. 2019 – Dec. 2019

University of Florida International Center, Office for Global Research Engagement

- Created and implemented social media strategies to maximize engagement and reach
- Promoted the Fulbright program through social media, email marketing, internal newsletters and newspapers, ensuring alignment with institutional goals
- Facilitated new faculty outreach to foster connections and integrate new faculty into the UF academic community
- Coordinated events and implemented strategies to increase event attendance rates

**Communications Assistant**

Jan. 2019 – May 2019

University of Florida Department of Health Outcomes and Biomedical Informatics

- Translated complex research into accessible content for lay audiences
- Showcased department students, events and publications in print and digital content to enhance the department's image and visibility
- Edited newsletters, proposals, graphics and WordPress website content
- Developed feature articles about faculty members

**CERTIFICATES**

International Communication   University of Florida	2019
Hootsuite Platform   Hootsuite	2019
Google Analytics   Google	2019
Mobile Marketing   Lynda	2019
Marketing Management   University of Southern California	2017

**SKILLS**

G Suite, Microsoft Suite, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe InDesign, Muck Rack, Podchaser, Canva

**MEMBERSHIPS**

Member, Public Relations Student Society of America	2016 – 2019
Member, Golden Key International Honor Society	2018 – 2019
Member, Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society	2015 – 2017

**COMMUNITY & CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT**

Member, Invisible Disabilities Association	2026 – Present
Member, Pacific Birding Collective	2025 – Present
Tap Dance Participant, Diamond Head Theatre	2025 – Present
Visual Artist   Online Art Shop (Watercolor, Gouache, Acrylic)	2024 – Present